

# Position Paper on the Insider Movement

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The last four decades have witnessed a major shift in missionary thought and practice. The Lausanne Movement, launched in 1974 at the world congress in Switzerland, sparked a worldwide revolution of innovative approaches to missions. Driven by a strong desire to see the Great Commission fulfilled in our lifetime, myriads of mission agencies implemented major changes in their mission statements and strategies. This gave rise to an ocean of new methods and approaches.

This paper will focus on the Insider Movement (IM) because of the growing concern in missions circles about the philosophy and practices of the movement, especially in Muslim contexts. Some agencies have drafted position statements barring their staff from extreme contextualization practices.

It is worthwhile to note that God has been doing wonderful things among Muslims all over the world. The numbers of conversions to Christ are unprecedented. Although the IM claims huge results, most of the fruit is produced by national believers who faithfully preach and teach the word to their own people, often unbeknownst to western missionaries. Due to the scope of this paper we will not be addressing fruitful practices. Rather, we will expose the unbiblical concepts and practices of the Insider Movement.

## **What is the Insider Movement?**

*Insider Movement* is a fairly recent term used to describe a variety of approaches such as Common Ground, Common Word, Camel Method, and the C1-C6 scale of contextualization. Although leaders of these movements do not all agree on details, they share common convictions. Some of them object to being categorized as Insiders. However, an examination of each approach reveals that they hold in common similar views of Islam, Muhammad, and the Qur'an. Consequently, their view of God, Christ, and the gospel are impacted.

David Hesselgrave, a prominent missiologist, wrote in "Contextualization that is authentic and relevant" (*International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12(3): 115-119.):

“It is obvious that a wide variety of meanings, methods, and models are attached to the word *contextualization*... Still in its infancy, that word has already been defined and redefined, used and abused, amplified and vilified, coronated and crucified. (Hesselgrave 1984:693)”

Nevertheless, the writings and practices of Insiders demonstrate a number of presuppositions that they seem to agree on. Generally, Insiders tend to have a positive view of Islam, Muhammad and the Qur’an. Many believe that Muhammad is some sort of prophet from God, that the Qur’an is at least a partially inspired word from God that points to Jesus, and that Islamic culture is not contradictory to the biblical message. Therefore, they do not invite Muslims out of Islam (they would call this “extraction”). Rather, they ask Muslims to follow Jesus while remaining Muslim and participating in Islamic religious practices such as prayer in mosques, reading the Qur’an, and fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Proponents of these approaches are extremely vocal. They have been given major platforms in seminaries, publications, and international conferences.

### **Positive factors**

It would be unfair and untrue to claim that the Insider Movement is all wrong. The study of contextualization indeed has benefitted the missionary movement in many ways.

1. The Muslim world, which had been virtually ignored, suddenly jumped to the forefront of missions.
2. There is a heightened awareness and involvement in the once forgotten Muslim world by churches and mission organizations.
3. New mission agencies began to emerge for the exclusive purpose of reaching Muslims. Most large mission agencies now have Muslim ministry departments.
4. Numerous journals, books, and publications have emerged in print and online.
5. Seminaries increasingly offer degrees in Islamic studies and missiology.
6. There has been a greater sensitivity to the culture and compassion toward Muslims in place of prejudice and even hatred by many.
7. There is now more interest in understanding Islam and gaining better knowledge of the Qur’an.
8. There is a growing enthusiasm by workers about reaching out to difficult fields through creative access to Muslim countries which were traditionally closed.

The motivation and intentions are generally good. Many have been drawn to the movement innocently because they have been taught that it is the only approach that works. The Insider approach also provides many good and innovative ideas

that rightly challenge some traditional methods. However, it is extremely important for donors, pastors, Christian leaders, and mission directors to be aware of the pitfalls of this movement. We need to examine it in light of the scriptures in obedience to the warning: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

### **Drawbacks**

Despite its positive contributions, the Insider Movement has many downsides. The message of the gospel has been polluted and muddied by syncretism. Echoing postmodern sentiment, Christian workers became enamored with cultural diversity and innovative methodology. Rather than being bold, workers have become secretive in the name of cultural sensitivity. The result is that the transformational power of the gospel is surrendered to cheap grace and a gospel that costs as little as possible.

Traditional missionary approaches have been mocked and set aside in favor of “missiologically correct” methods. Statistics about “insider movements” are commonly exaggerated. Claims of hundreds, even millions, of followers have been reported. When asked where these people are, the answer is often, “We cannot tell you because of security concerns.”

The movement has been controversial to say the least. Much confusion and division has arisen in the missionary community and, more importantly, among national believers. Although each method claims a large following, some leaders have admitted that the numbers are much less than originally thought. Numbers and statistics can be large or small depending on whether they are referring to seekers, converts, or members. Since these groups remain within the Muslim community, it is impossible to quantify the results, so most of the reported statistics are sheer speculation. Surveys have been done to investigate the actual beliefs of the members and indigenous leaders of these groups, with disturbing results.

### **Mission to Islam**

It is no secret that reaching Muslims is among the most difficult tasks of the modern church. Missionaries began to discover that there were many barriers that needed to be surmounted and that communicating the gospel to Muslims was extremely challenging. Until recently, the missionary movement has been unsuccessful in most Muslim lands. Churches were small and weak and tended to draw membership from historical churches rather than from Muslim communities.

The lack of fruit in drawing Muslims to Christianity was attributed to many factors including closed doors, resistance by Muslims, negative effects of colonialism, and the association between the message of the gospel and westernization.

### **God is drawing Muslims to his Kingdom**

While many missionaries are consumed with finding new approaches and writing them down, there is a band of faithful workers preaching the gospel unashamedly. The church is growing in the Muslim world. The major work is being done by the national church in the midst of suffering and persecution and despite its poverty and limited resources. There is also a body of missionaries who have adhered to the old fashioned preaching of the gospel. Many of these work quietly and prefer not to publicize their results. Some are just too busy doing ministry to stop and address the emerging trends. As a result, Insiders have been largely unchallenged in missiological arenas until recently.

The excessive use and abuse of contextualization has finally alerted some theologians, missions leaders and church leaders to this problem and a number of them have risen to the challenge of addressing this movement.

### **Problems with the Insider Movement:**

If you hear Insiders speak, it is admittedly hard to judge them. They are well meaning, compassionate, zealous and sacrificial. However, good intentions are not enough. God can use any method. The question is: Should we settle for any method or are we to test the spirits and make sure we are biblically correct?

Here is a summary of the main problems with this movement:

#### **1. Wrong diagnosis**

In the medical field a wrong diagnosis can be fatal. Contextualization was theorized based on the wrong diagnosis of why “missionary work among Muslims has failed in the last fourteen centuries.” Failure was blamed on closed doors, persecution, wrong methods and cultural insensitivity of western missionary practices. Although there is some merit to all of these problems, the foundational problem is much simpler: “The harvest is plentiful and workers are few.” (Matthew 9:37, Luke 10:2) Since the mid seventies the traditional methods were rejected without being tried. When asked if he has tried to use the Bible directly to share the gospel, a leader in the Insider Movement replied, “Well, I was not interested in reaching Muslims until I learned of this method.” He had not led a soul to Christ, yet suddenly he was a purported expert on the how to use the Qur’an as a bridge. Many alternative methods have been suggested without first trying the

“traditional” method of proclaiming the good news of God’s love and forgiveness. The reality is that wherever the gospel has been preached, Muslims have responded. What is needed is more people preaching the clear and simple, yet powerful gospel. Significant numbers of Muslims are hungry and waiting. Jesus already warned: "For many are invited, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14)

## **2. Wrong Paradigm**

The various approaches within the Insider Movement base their philosophy of ministry on a paradigm designed by John Travis (Pseudonym), namely, the C1-C6 Scale. It is a scale that claims to describe the various types of churches that supposedly exist or should exist in the Muslim world. Here is a summary of the scale:

### **C1 Model: (*Traditional church using non-indigenous language.*)**

- Christian churches in Muslim countries that exist as islands, removed from the culture. Christians exist as an ethnic/religious minority.

### **C2 Model: (*Traditional church using indigenous language.*)**

- Church uses indigenous language, but all its cultural forms are far removed from the broader Islamic culture.

### **C3 Model: (*Contextualized Christ-centered communities using Muslim’s language and non-religiously indigenous cultural forms.*)**

- Style of worship, dress, etc., are loosely from the indigenous culture.
- Local rituals and traditions, if used, are purged of religious elements.
- A conscious attempt is made to break from all visible elements of Islam—such as observing Ramadan, dietary laws, association with the mosque and so forth.
- Believers may meet in a church or more religiously neutral locations, such as homes.
- **C3 amounts to an “extraction” strategy.**
- The majority of congregations are of Muslim background and call themselves Christians.

### **C4 Model: (*Contextualized Christ-centered communities using Muslim’s language and biblically permissible cultural and Islamic forms.*)**

- Similar to C3, except believers’ worship looks like Muslim worship, in that they keep the fast, avoid pork and alcohol, and use Islamic terms and dress.
- The community is almost entirely of Muslim background.

- Though highly contextualized, believers are not seen as Muslims by the Muslim community.
- They do not consider themselves as Muslims, although they may not accept the term “Christian” either. Believers call themselves “followers of Isa Al Masih,” (Jesus the Messiah).

**C5 Model:** *(Christ-centered communities of “Messianic Muslims” who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.)*

- Believers remain legally and socially within the Islamic community.
- **They do not view themselves as “Christians,” since in context that refers to traitors against the community.**
- Some aspects of Islam that are incompatible with the Bible are rejected or if possible reinterpreted, while others are not.
- **Believers may remain active in the mosque, commonly pray traditional Muslim prayers, fast, and do all the things their Islamic neighbors do.**
- Unsaved Muslims may view C5 believers as deviant and masquerading as Muslims and may expel them from the Islamic community.
- If sufficient numbers permit, a C5 “Messianic mosque” may be established.

**C6 Model:** *(Small Christ-centered communities of secret/underground believers.)*

- Isolated by extreme hostility, usually these are individual believers but sometimes they meet together in small groups. Believers typically do not attempt to share their faith, but some suffer imprisonment or martyrdom.

This paradigm is man-made and is designed to direct the reader to the C5 level by using terminology that biases the reader against C1-C3 and language that speaks favorably toward C4 and C5. For C1 and C2 we read: “Christian churches exist.. as islands removed from the culture.” For C3 we read: “C3 amounts to an extraction strategy.” C4 seems to be more accepted, but certainly C5 is described as the best. Insiders usually are associated with the C5 level.

A more biblical paradigm promotes transformation of the community rather than conformity to the culture.

### **3. Wrong view of Islam**

Many insiders view Islam as an improvement on the pagan idolatry of pre-Islamic

Arabia. One of the major architects of contextualization, Charles Kraft equated Muhammad with the Apostle Paul, writing, “What Paul did by interpreting Hebrew Christianity to the Greeks, Muhammad did for the Arabs.” Nabeel Jabbour, a Navigator leader, believes that “Islam as a religion started down the right track but jumped off the rails.” These, and many others who have bought into the Insider mentality believe that Islam needs to be reformed, not abandoned.

#### **4. Wrong View of the Qur’an**

Insiders hold that the gospel message is contained in the Qur’an. References to Jesus in the Qur’an are given new meanings by interpreting them from a Christian perspective. Insider leaders read into the Qur’an to conjure up a nonexistent Christian soteriology (way of salvation) that contradicts the true meaning of the text. They often say that one reason the Qur’an is a word of God is that it points to Jesus.

“A careful study of the Qur'an reveals that most of the elements of salvation, Jesus, the gospel, are indeed laying there ready to be used and exploited... A reinterpreted Qur'an can carry Christians a long way.” (A missionary with Christian Reformed World Missions, in response to a comment on a Christianity Today online article.)

Fouad Accad writes in his book *Building Bridges*: “After 30 years of studying the Qur’an I find it overwhelmingly pro-Christ, pro-Bible and pro-Christian.” While some verses in the Qur’an may contain a positive view of Jesus as a prophet, the Qur’an denies Christ’s deity and his redemptive work on the cross. The Muslim understanding of Jesus as Messiah, the “word of God”, and the “spirit of God” is totally different from the Christian interpretation. It is dishonest to reinterpret the Qur’an as if it encourages faith in Christ for salvation. It is likely that Muslims will discover the true Islamic interpretation later on and renounce faith in Jesus because it was founded on misinterpretations. We as Christians do not accept Islamic reinterpretations of the Bible, such as Muslim efforts to claim that the Bible prophecies about Muhammad. Anyone with a working knowledge of the Bible can easily dismiss these claims as propaganda. However, Insider reinterpretations of the Qur’an go to far greater lengths than their Muslim counterparts, creating a shameful image of Christians as deceivers and twisters of the truth. It is not wrong to quote the Qur’an the way Paul quotes the Greek poets, as a discussion point to introduce biblical truth. But it is problematic when the Qur’an is given sacred value along with the Bible. To authenticate the Bible’s message through the Qur’an is to give the Qur’an preeminence over the Bible.

## **5. Wrong Use of the Qur'an**

In his speech to the areopagus in Acts 17, Paul made reference to the “altar of the unknown God” and quoted a short line from Greek poetry. However, he did not use Greek thought or literature as the basis of his message. He concentrated on the scriptures. No doubt had he lived in our times, Paul would have quoted the Qur'an too. But he would not have quoted it excessively, built his theology on it, or hint that the Qur'an may be “a word from God”. Paul used a couple references to Greek thought to introduce a biblical message that clearly contradicted Greek philosophy and religion. IM, however, uses the Qur'an as the basis of their message, which they claim is consistent with a true understanding of Islam.

One tract produced by the Camel Method to give to Muslims is called “Ruhullah.” The tract explains the message of salvation based on numerous texts from the Qur'an, supplemented by three Bible verses (John 8:32, 14:5, 15:13) . At the end of the tract, a verse from the Bible is quoted. When the Bible is quoted at the very end, by that time the reader is deeply entrenched in the Qur'an. A reference or two to the Bible does not wipe out the mental and spiritual impact of the Qur'an on the readers. Then at the end of the tract comes a fully contextualized sinner's prayer. The prayer basically asks Muslims to acknowledge that God sent the prophet Isa as a sacrifice to save them. The tract promises that this prayer will guarantee them forgiveness of sins and an eternal life. The prayer lacks the most critical components of the gospel. There is not recognition of sin and rebellion against God, no plea for repentance, no call to surrender their lives to Jesus as Lord and give up everything for the sake of winning Christ. The entire tract does not speak of being born again by the Spirit of God, or say that Jesus is the Son of God. The sonship and lordship of Christ have been sacrificed to ease the acceptance of free salvation, reducing Jesus to a mere scapegoat. There is no call to holiness, or any call to action besides praying the prayer at the end, after which it says, “You can now live your life in peace knowing that after death you can go directly to be with Allah.”

From beginning to end, the tract is designed to be viewed by readers as a Muslim message with some references to the Bible.

It is one thing to quote the Qur'an in the context of a biblical message and another to use the Qur'an to delude people into thinking that it too is a word of God that contains the truth about Christ.

## **6. Weak Hermeneutics**

In addition to their creative Qur'anic reinterpretations, the Insider Movement has misinterpreted and twisted biblical texts to justify its methods. The Insider Movement violates solid principles of hermeneutics. They often fish for meanings in a text that contradict the context. They do this in interpreting both the Bible and

the Qur'an. Paul's speech on Mars Hill in Acts 17 is often used as an example of a contextualist who quotes Greek poets to deliver his message. A closer look at Paul's speech reveals that Paul proclaimed Jesus, spoke about God's judgement, and invited the pagans to repent and believe in the resurrected Jesus. His audience recognized that he was bringing in new teaching about "new gods" and they mocked his teaching on the resurrection. The result of his speech was some rejected others accepted his message. Acts records these significant words: "those who believed joined Paul..." Acts 17:4, 34. He did not join them (inside paganism), but they joined him.

Muslim scholars will not accept any interpretation of the Qur'an if it tries to make the Qur'an say what it does not say. Insiders are guilty of violating Islamic hermeneutics as well. Muslims who have been taught by Insiders what the "real" interpretation of the Qur'an is often get angry and reject the message Insiders have taught them when they discover that the Qur'an does not carry those meanings. Ultimately they begin to learn the true Islamic meanings and they realize they have been deceived by the missionary.

## **7. Diluted Gospel**

In order to gain a hearing, the IM makes the gospel message more palatable and less offensive. Insiders seem to be satisfied when a Muslim recognizes Jesus as more than a prophet. They convince Muslims that the Qur'an holds him with higher honor and calls him "Word of God" and "Spirit of God". A Muslim cannot argue with what the Qur'an says, but that does not mean he or she has understood the incarnation of the Logos of God (John 1:1). There are millions of nominal Christians who cognitively believe that Jesus died, but that does not make them born again by the Spirit of God. The assumption that all we need to do is to get Muslims to accept Christian claims is a major problem with the method. When the message is contaminated by the Qur'an and other competing truth claims the hearer is confused. Though he or she may go along and pray the sinner's prayer, the spark of the Spirit of God is missing. God wants us to present the pure message in context of His revealed word, not from any book that acknowledges Jesus or seems to revere him.

## **8. Confusion between Culture and Religion**

Many books on contextualization emerged in the mid seventies, declaring culture to be the most important aspect of a Muslim's life. We read that Islam is an indivisible mixture of religion and culture, and that it is futile to try to separate the two. IM proponents confuse Islam as a religion with the culture of Muslims. There are 56 countries with a Muslim majority and each has many subcultures and/or ethnic groups. In Northern Iraq there are Muslim, Yazidi, and Christian Kurds.

They are united in Kurdish identity and culture but separated by religion. Similarly Berbers, Tatars, Albanians, and hundreds of other ethnic groups do not have to give up their ethnic identity when they convert but they surely have to give up their religion. It is naive to lump all Muslims into one cultural category, even though Muslims themselves dream of being united as such, under the Islamic *umma* (community or kingdom). It is unfortunate that the IM actually buys into this fictitious concept of a unified *umma* that is propagated by Islamic groups. However, praying in a mosque rather than a church is not a cultural act. It is religious. Denying that Jesus is the Son of God is not cultural, but theological. If culture is the sum total of a group's lifestyle, values and beliefs, can we as Christians endorse the whole package? Let us celebrate cultural diversity, but not at the expense of the truth.

### **9. Weak Christology**

Perhaps the most critical problem with the IM is its view of Christ. If you read the literature and the way Insiders present Christ, you will discover that they have surrendered the biblical image of Jesus to the Jesus of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the enemy's tool to deceive Muslims into thinking that they believe in Jesus. The Jesus of the Qur'an is a different Jesus, one who may be a great prophet, but not the only Son of the Living God. In the Qur'an, Jesus is not the savior of the world and God's only mediator between God and man. It is unbelievable that Bible translators in the languages of Muslims are removing the phrase "Son of God" and the fatherhood of God from their translations. They explain this action by claiming that "Son" is not literal anyway, so doing away with it does not change the message. This demonstrates their weak Christology. If Jesus is not the Son of God, then he is just another prophet. In this and many other ways, Insiders are giving in to Islamic theology. The gospel message must include the fact that God in his great love came down in human form to rescue us. John 3:16 states that God so loved the world that he sacrificed his one and only Son. If Jesus is not the Son of God, there John 3:16 is meaningless. Paul stressed: "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles." I Corinthians 1:22-23. IMers need to rise to the challenge of preaching a message that may offend Muslims. It seems that they are not willing to do that.

### **10. Succumbs to Violation of Human rights**

Muslim nations have persecuted Christians for centuries. Their laws against Ridda (leaving Islam) violate the God-given rights of free choice and expression. The Insider approach denies Muslims their inalienable right to choose their religion and enjoy full benefits like all other citizens. The Insider approach does not contribute

to the fight for the human rights of these people as their conversion is not brought to light and therefore they are tacitly succumbing to human rights abuses in Muslim nations.

How long shall we continue to accept Islam's intimidation of minorities and their abuse of power? The blood of the martyrs trickling down from Calvary to Saudi Arabia has been the seed of the church throughout history. Insiders need to join the cause of freedom by encouraging people to fight for their freedom. Courageous people in Malaysia, Iran, Egypt among others have caused political shakeups in those countries. Now authorities have to think twice before they execute one more convert to Christianity. The Church in Malaysia, Algeria, Kosova and numerous other places have won many rights that they could not have been attained without sacrifice. Insiders are promoting a gospel that costs little. The gospel cost Jesus everything, and we all need to count the cost of the salvation that Jesus won for us on the cross.

### **11. Low view of the Universal Church**

By keeping "followers of Isa" inside Islam, Insiders are in effect promoting the Muslim *Umma* and by the same token undermining the One Holy Universal Church. Jesus stressed, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." Here Jesus wants to combine the various communities into one body. (John 10:16.) "that they may be one as we are one (John 17:22.) Ekklesia, the Greek for church is the called out ones from the main stream of any community to the : "One holy nation." (I Peter 2:9). The Muslim *Umma* has a political agenda of world dominance. What will happen to the Insider followers of Isa when the *umma* imposes Sharia law on them? To encourage converts to stay separate from the rest of the church is to push them into the kingdom of darkness without the support they need from the children of light (Ephesians 5:8).

### **12. Undermines the New Identity in Christ**

Insiders want followers of Isa to retain their Muslim identity. They argue that "Christian" is a bad term because of connotations of immorality or association with the West. They prefer to be known as "Followers Of Isa." There are many problems with this:

a) Muslims who hear the phrase "Follower Of Isa" have to figure out whether you are a Christian or a convert to Islam. If you continue to deny that you are a Christian then you are practically admitting that you have converted to Islam.

b) The concept of following a prophet is foreign to a Muslim. Islam is about submission to Allah and not following Muhammad. So while Insiders are trying to contextualize they have only brought confusion.

c) It is harder to explain what is meant by “follower of Isa” than to dispel misperceptions about the meaning of a true Christian?

d) To give a follower of Jesus a Muslim identity is an affront to the cross and a blatant denial of his name. Peter was emphatic when he said: “if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.” (1 Peter 4:16.) This verse alone is enough to defeat the argument that the name Christian is not in the Bible or that it was a derogatory name. Peter says even so, do not be ashamed but rather praise God. The designations: “Muslim Background Believer”, “Muslim follower of Jesus”, or “Completed Pakka Muslim” do not reflect the shift in allegiance nor help the convert in the “newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) In fact it encourages converts to hide their identity. Until converts gain a new identity they remain in the claws of the old and over time they abandon their cognitive convictions and return to the old ways. “If anyone is in Christ...” refers to belonging to a new community identified with Christ. Notice also in these among many other verses that the *name* of Jesus is our identity. “They will treat you this way because of my *name*...” (John 15:21) and “I will show him how much he must suffer for my *name*.” (Acts 9:16)

### **13. Undermines the Spiritual Warfare**

The Bible is clear about the nature of the spiritual battle. (Ephesians 6:12; II Corinthians 10:4). There is a Satan out there. There are demons. There is false teaching and there are false prophets. Insiders are bold in infiltrating the battle zone and exposing themselves to Satan’s tactics. Already there are rumors that some of them have officially converted to Islam. Many of them dress like Muslims and live the Muslim lifestyle including attending the mosque, fasting during Ramadan and participating in Islamic rituals at every level. Some have no problem praying the *shahada* (confession) that Muhammad is a prophet from God. This not only exposes them but also their converts to false teaching by Muslim *imams* and teachers.

### **14. Undermines Fellowship of the Saints**

Insiders deny converts the opportunity to fully participate in open Christian fellowship. Insider converts tend to marry non-believing Muslims and often do not even tell their spouses they are any different than the rest of the Muslim community. How long can their fervent faith last in an oppressive environment. How long will the light shine under a bushel? Christian Fellowship is paramount

for spiritual growth. Without it many fervent Christians have lost their faith. To cause this by design is appalling. Converts do not understand Christian fellowship unless they see it modeled. It takes a Muslim years to know how to relate to other Christians. The fruit of the Spirit must be encouraged and lived out in a loving community. One of the biggest struggles of Muslims is learning how to forgive. Only when they have to battle this with other Christians will they be able to fully grasp God's Grace and forgiveness. Insiders deny converts these opportunities that are only possible within the fellowship of the saints.

### **15. Legalism Vs. Grace**

Islam is a legalistic system that gives Muslims the impression that when they perform certain religious rites and duties, they have done all they can and God will have to add his mercy for them to have any hope in eternal life. Remaining within Islam and practicing the rituals denies them the understanding of God's grace and the truth that we are not saved by works but by faith based on God's love and grace which is a gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8-9) When Muslims perform the prayer rituals, they are not communicating with God. They have memorized certain verses from the Qur'an. Most of them don't even understand what they are saying. Yet what matters to them is that they are performing their duties as required by the Sharia. How is the Insider able to demonstrate not only in words but in actions the richness of God's grace against the futility of human effort to please God? The answer is: It is not possible to practice legalism and believe otherwise. "Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules..." (Colossians 2:20-23)

### **16. Truth in Advertising or Deception?**

The tactic of appearing as Muslims and accepting the Qur'an and Muhammad without revealing the full truth that Islam is an evil system is deceptive. As soon as the truth comes out, the new "followers" are likely to feel cheated and reject the "fake" truths they were exposed to. Muslims will feel manipulated to go through a process without knowing where this will lead them.

### **17. Avoids Extraction and Persecution**

One of the major motivating factors behind the Insider Movement is the desire to help converts avoid persecution that is a result of extraction. When a Muslim becomes a Christian in the traditional way, they are exposed to persecution and in some cases execution by their family or by the authorities. The problem with this is that persecution is part and parcel of the calling of God on our lives to exchange earthly life for the eternal life. Jesus was clear in his call that when we come to him we abandon everything including family and possessions. (Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:26) He also warned us that we will be persecuted, "...they will lay hands on you

and persecute you... all on account of my name.” (Luke 21:12) And “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”(John 15:20) The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

Of course missionaries should not expose converts to persecution. The fact in the Muslim world is that most converts are never persecuted. Many experience no more than a scolding, argument, or some level of conflict with their families that doesn't last very long. Often this lasts for a short time, days, weeks and in some rare cases a few months. It is not uncommon for other family members to begin following in the steps of the “defector” within a year or two. If converts need to be extracted physically from a potentially violent situation, the church should be ready to find them a safe haven until the threat subsides, which it does in most cases. However, unless a Muslim is willing to give up his life, he has not understood the nature of the new life in Christ. “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.” (Matthew 19:29) “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.” (Mark 8:35)

### **18. Downplays the Role of the Holy Spirit**

Conversion is not a cultural, social or psychological phenomenon. True conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. “...no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3) “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...” (John 6:44) Paul was quick to tell the churches he planted: “This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. (I Corinthians 2:13) And “When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power...” (I Corinthians 2:1-4)

Insider tactics are conceived behind desks and at seminary libraries, not in the thicket of darkness proclaiming the light of Christ. It is an academic approach theorized by professors who have had little or no success on the mission field and little or no experience in the Muslim world. No strategy, no matter how well thought through, can save even one soul, though any strategy when the Holy Spirit is present has the potential of convicting the lost of “...sin and righteousness and judgment.” (John 16:8)

### **19. Promotes a Cheap Gospel**

When Christ called his disciples he expected them to leave everything and follow him. (Luke 5:11). Abraham was called to “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go...” (Genesis 12:1) In the excellent book by Ronald Sider “The scandal of the Evangelical Conscience, we read: When Christians today reduce the gospel to forgiveness of sins, they are offering a one-sided heretical message that is flatly unfaithful to Jesus...” This is basically what Insiders are offering Muslims. Jesus sacrificed (Qurban) to guarantee you forgiveness of sins. This renders Jesus as a sacrificed scapegoat, not a risen Lord. See the “Ruhullah” tract on the Camel Method website ([camelmethod.com/tracks.htm](http://camelmethod.com/tracks.htm)).

### **Handling the Word of God Correctly**

All false teaching boils down to misinterpretations of the Bible. Individuals and groups often interpret the Bible in a manner that supports their presuppositions and personal inclinations. The Apostle Paul was well aware of this danger when he exhorted Timothy to “handle the word of truth correctly” (2 Tim 2:15) And he added: “... we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.” (II Corinthians 4:2)

Affirming biblical authority is not about quoting scriptures to support our positions. Rather it is discovering God’s mind and heart concerning all aspects of life and ministry. There are right and wrong ways to interpret the Bible. Heresy and false teachings are endemic in the missiological community. Today, in a post modern worldview many pastors and theologians are hesitant to judge other people’s interpretations. Though this may show compassion, it gives the wrong impression that any interpretation is as good as any other, thus allowing heresy to go unchallenged.

### **Final Word:**

As people entrusted with the gospel, we need to make every effort to protect its purity and expose false teaching. Although the Insider Movement has some positive elements, it is generally contrary to the word of God and needs to humbly re-evaluate its approach. We who try to uphold the gospel need to not be distracted by false teaching but rather be motivated to preach the unadulterated truth of the gospel and expect it to transform all those who come in touch with it.